UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/51/381
19 September 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fifty-first session
Item 31 of the provisional agenda*

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 2	3
II.	CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS	3 - 8	3
III.	GENERAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND ITS SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS	9 - 15	4
IV.	FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND ITS SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS	16 - 35	7
	A. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	18 - 20	8
	B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	21 - 28	9
	C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	29	10

* A/51/150.

96-24724 (E) 111096 181096

/...

CONTENTS (continued)

		Paragraphs	Page
	D. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	30 - 33	10
	E. United Nations Environment Programme	34	11
	F. United Nations Industrial Development Organization	35	11
V.	COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	36 - 56	12
	A. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	36 - 38	12
	B. United Nations Development Programme	39 - 43	12
	C. United Nations Children's Fund	44 - 46	13
	D. Economic Commission for Africa	47	14
	E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	48 - 52	15
	F. International Fund for Agricultural Development	53 - 55	15
	G. Other United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations	56	16

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 50/17 of 20 November 1995, took note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/573) and requested the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to continue cooperation in their common search for solutions to global problems relating to international peace and security, disarmament, self-determination, decolonization, fundamental human rights, social and economic development and technical cooperation. It further encouraged the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to continue to expand their cooperation with OIC. The General Assembly also welcomed the efforts of the secretariats of the two Organizations to strengthen cooperation between them in the political field and to undertake consultations with a view to defining the mechanisms of such cooperation.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly recommended that, in order to enhance cooperation and for the purpose of review and appraisal of progress, a general meeting between representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions should take place in 1996, and every two years thereafter. It also recommended that coordination meetings of focal points of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions should henceforth be held concurrently with the general meeting. It requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session on the state of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC.

II. CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS

3. On 2 October 1995, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of OIC held their annual coordination meeting at United Nations Headquarters to discuss the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, in particular those items of concern and interest to OIC. In response to an invitation from OIC, a senior representative from the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat attended the meeting.

4. The coordination meeting reviewed the current international situation, with particular attention to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Jammu and Kashmir; Afghanistan; Somalia; the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan; the consequences of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait; the situation pertaining to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Security Council resolutions 731 (1992) and 883 (1993); Cyprus; and Tajikistan.

5. On 3 October 1995, the Secretary-General held a meeting at United Nations Headquarters with the Secretary-General of OIC, His Excellency Dr. Hamid Al-Ghabid, to review progress in cooperation between the two Organizations and to discuss issues of mutual interest.

6. A high-level meeting subsequently took place between senior officials of the secretariats of the two Organizations on 5 October. The United Nations Secretariat delegation was headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and the OIC secretariat delegation by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and ways of further strengthening cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and OIC in the political field, as called for in General Assembly resolution 49/15 of 15 November 1994. Both sides expressed satisfaction at the excellent level of cooperation between the two Organizations and agreed to hold regular consultations with one another on issues of mutual interest.

7. During the period under review, regular consultations were held and information exchanged between the secretariats of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, with regard to ongoing peacemaking efforts of the two Organizations, particularly in Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Somalia. Periodic consultations were also held between the Head of the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan and senior OIC officials, with a view to promoting closer coordination and cooperation in the efforts of the two Organizations to bring peace to Afghanistan. OIC has also been accorded observer status in the United Nations-sponsored continual round of inter-Tajik talks. Regular information has also been exchanged with regard to the two Organizations' efforts to promote peace and national reconciliation in Somalia.

8. On 15 February 1996, the Secretary-General convened a high-level meeting of regional organizations (including OIC) with which the United Nations has cooperated in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. The agenda of the meeting focused on modalities for cooperation and principles to govern cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. The meeting also considered cooperation in peace-building, in both its preventive and post-conflict contexts, and discussed new, practical and more effective ways of working together. The meeting was part of the Secretary-General's ongoing effort to continue the dialogue between the United Nations and regional organizations and to agree on ways and means of enhancing cooperation. It was held within the overall framework of "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111 and A/50/60-S/1995/1).

III. GENERAL MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND ITS SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

9. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/17, a general meeting on cooperation between the representatives of the secretariats of the United Nations system and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its specialized institutions was held at Geneva from 26 to 28 June 1996. In accordance with the agreement between the coordinating secretariats, the meeting adopted the following agenda items:

1. Organization of work.

2. (a) Review of cooperation and appraisal of progress achieved in the nine jointly agreed priority areas of cooperation:

(i) Development of science and technology;

(ii) Trade and development;

(iii) Technical cooperation among Islamic countries;

(iv) Assistance to refugees;

(v) Food security and agriculture;

(vi) Education and eradication of illiteracy;

(vii) Investment mechanisms and joint ventures;

(viii) Human resources development;

(ix) Environment;

(b) Review of existing cooperation in other jointly agreed areas;

(c) Identification of possible new areas of cooperation.

3. Consideration of proposals for enhancing the mechanisms of cooperation between the United Nations system and OIC and its institutions.

10. Representatives of the following departments of the United Nations and other organizations and agencies of the United Nations system participated in the meeting: Department of Political Affairs; Department for Development Support and Management Services; Department of Public Information; Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) (also representing Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)); Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); World Food Programme (WFP); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

11. Representatives of the following organizations and institutions of OIC participated in the meeting: Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development (IFSTAD); Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT); Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC); Islamic Development Bank (IDB); Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO); Islamic Institute of

Technology (IIT); Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA); Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF); and Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

12. Based on the discussions in the meetings, which centred around the working papers prepared by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and OIC and its institutions, the meeting agreed to continue to strengthen cooperation in the nine already established priority areas, as defined in specific agreements reached between the agencies of the two Organizations at the meeting. (These agreements are contained in the final report of the meeting, which was transmitted by the United Nations Secretariat to all the agencies of the United Nations and to the OIC secretariat in July 1996.)

13. The meeting endorsed the following recommendations made during the previous meeting of United Nations/OIC focal points, held at Geneva in June 1995:

(a) Focal points should exchange their work programmes and might join one another in some of their scheduled activities of mutual interest;

(b) Focal points should agree on medium-term (three to five years) cooperation programmes, to the extent possible, and are encouraged to form joint committees for planning and follow-up;

(c) Cooperation between the United Nations system and OIC and its subsidiaries should be conceived in the context of realizing synergy and added value of joint efforts in member States. Joint programming procedures and timeliness should be improved, with due consideration for the involvement of other actors, be they bilateral or multilateral, governmental or non-governmental organizations. There should be consultations of focal points from both Organizations on programme elements that have been approved as priorities by the respective governing bodies and have resources earmarked for them in 1996-1997. For the 1998-1999 biennium and beyond, consultations should be undertaken at the time of programme budget preparations;

(d) Focal points should formalize their relations through the signing of memoranda of understanding;

(e) Focal points should incorporate in their respective work programmes the activities, projects and programmes on which agreement has been reached for joint implementation. Agencies of the United Nations and OIC should also ensure that appropriate budgetary resources are secured as far as possible for these work programmes;

(f) Specific contact points should be designated in each of the participating United Nations and OIC institutions. These contact points should be encouraged to realize at least one joint activity between their respective institutions during the year between the cooperation meetings;

(g) A small high-level committee consisting of two senior officials from both the United Nations and OIC should be established to oversee the work of cooperation between the United Nations and OIC institutions and to facilitate

their work by providing necessary support, as well as to remove any hurdles in the way of the realization of their joint activities;

(h) Joint activities and projects should be partially financed, as far as possible, by the concerned focal points and/or agencies involved. Additional sources of financing might also be jointly identified. In that regard, a set of basic guidelines for funding jointly agreed projects and programmes should also be developed at the next general meeting to operationalize project funding mechanisms;

(i) Since the question of financing of technical cooperation activities supported by OIC and its subsidiary bodies is of crucial importance, particularly in view of diminishing international resources for official development assistance, the Islamic Development Bank and other funding institutions in the Islamic world should participate in periodic consultations between the United Nations and OIC.

14. The meeting expressed appreciation for the consolidated papers submitted by the United Nations and OIC reviewing the ways and means of enhancing the actual mechanisms of cooperation between the two Organizations. In this regard, the meeting endorsed the specific proposals put forward in the consolidated papers, as well as during the deliberations of the general meeting, as reflected in the agreements reached between counterpart United Nations and OIC institutions in their respective fields of interest. The meeting urged that the necessary follow-up action be taken by the mechanisms established for that purpose.

15. During the general meeting at Geneva, in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 50/17 and resolution No. 2/23-ORG adopted by the twenty-third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (see A/50/953-S/1996/344, annex III), senior officials of the political departments of the United Nations and OIC secretariats reviewed the proposals for strengthening cooperation in the political field put forward by the two secretariats. The two sides identified a number of modalities for enhancing United Nations-OIC information exchange, consultations and coordination, and agreed that those modalities would apply to areas of mutual interest. Both sides also discussed specific issues of common interest and concern. It was agreed that further high-level consultations on the identified modalities would be held between the representatives of the two secretariats during the annual sessions of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

IV. FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE AND ITS SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

16. The United Nations and OIC established areas of priority for cooperation and designated organizations and agencies on both sides to act as focal points for follow-up action that would be required for the implementation of recommendations adopted by joint meetings of the two Organizations. The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system serving as focal points for priority areas of action are as follows:

Organization/agency	Area
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Development of science and technology
United Nations Development Programme	Technical cooperation among Islamic countries
Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees	Assistance to refugees
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Food security and agriculture
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Education and eradication of illiteracy
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Investment mechanisms and joint ventures
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Human resources development
United Nations Environment Programme	Environment

17. Outlined below is a summary of the reports received from the United Nations organizations and agencies serving as focal points for the priority areas during the period under review.

A. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

18. At present, UNCTAD cooperates with OIC in carrying out joint studies on an ad hoc basis. An example of this is the recent joint study on trade flows and shipping opportunities among Islamic countries. It is suggested that this form of cooperation be carried out on a regular basis.

19. UNCTAD and OIC recently established a regular exchange of information on their respective ongoing and planned activities in the field of science and technology. This cooperation was further strengthened following the meeting of the focal points of the lead agencies of the United Nations system and OIC and its specialized institutions, held at Geneva from 19 to 21 June 1995. It was agreed at that meeting that UNCTAD and IFSTAD should consult each other on a number of proposed project ideas for member countries and the respective contribution each organization would make.

20. Consultations are currently taking place between UNCTAD and the Islamic Development Bank on a programme of activities on various aspects of the Uruguay

Round of multilateral trade negotiations, including accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), that could be of interest to several member States of OIC in West Africa and Central Asia. The programme would be financed by IDB and executed in close cooperation with UNCTAD and WTO. UNCTAD and IDB are also discussing the possibility of carrying out other technical assistance activities for the benefit of IDB member countries. UNCTAD and the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade are also cooperating with regard to other issues before the Uruguay Round for the benefit of OIC member countries.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

21. On 5 July 1988, OIC and UNHCR signed an agreement of cooperation, under which coordination on humanitarian issues would be increased. Cooperation would include regular consultations on subjects of mutual interest and exchange of information and documentation on the policies and activities of the two agencies, whereby OIC might participate as an observer in UNHCR Executive Committee meetings and UNHCR would participate as an observer at conferences and other activities of OIC.

22. Within the framework of this cooperation agreement, UNHCR and OIC have continued to expand their cooperation in priority areas relating to refugees and global humanitarian problems of common interest. Regular meetings have taken place between representatives of the two organizations, both at Geneva and at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

23. Exchanges between OIC and UNHCR were further expanded in the context of the meeting of United Nations/OIC focal points that took place at Geneva in September 1989. OIC expressed its support for UNHCR protection and assistance activities in the countries concerned. At that time, OIC indicated its willingness to assist UNHCR in enhancing its cooperation with its member States. UNHCR and OIC have since held a number of formal and informal meetings in this regard.

24. The High Commissioner's participation in the sixth extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina and her subsequent visit to OIC headquarters at Jeddah constituted a step forward in the two organizations' common search for humanitarian solutions to the increasingly complex refugee situation in the OIC member States. It is to be noted that OIC, on the occasion of such meetings, regularly adopts resolutions on enhancing its cooperation with UNHCR. Follow-up on these resolutions is ensured by joint meetings and consultations.

25. The participation of UNHCR in the twenty-third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Conakry from 9 to 13 December 1995, constituted a further step forward in the two organizations' common search for humanitarian solutions and adequate responses to the plight of various refugee groups in OIC member States.

26. With regard to UNHCR cooperation with the specialized institutions of OIC, it is worth noting that a number of concrete steps have been taken to implement

the terms of the special agreement signed in May 1991 between UNHCR and the Islamic Organization for Education, Science and Culture. This agreement provides for general and permanent cooperation, including exchange of expertise, regular meetings of a joint commission and mutual benefits in staff services.

27. Similar progress has also been achieved in UNHCR cooperation with IDB through the signature in January 1994 of a cooperation agreement. The main objective of this agreement is to enhance cooperation between the two organizations in the field of humanitarian assistance to refugees and returnees. Consultations are being conducted by the two parties to identify projects and plans designed to assist refugees and returnees, focusing on essential needs such as settlement, training, education, health and development.

28. In the field of promotion and dissemination of refugee law, UNHCR and OIC are exploring further opportunities to organize jointly seminars and conferences on asylum and refugee law in different Islamic countries.

C. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

29. Discussions were held in April 1996 between the Director of the FAO Investment Centre and the Islamic Development Bank to collaborate in the preparation of investment projects. During the period from April 1995 to May 1996, FAO completed the formulation of 14 additional investment projects in OIC countries for eventual consideration by financing institutions; investment requirements for these projects are estimated at US$ 768 million. Many of these projects aim at improving irrigation and drainage management and water use, increasing agricultural production, livestock and fisheries development and consolidating the crop protection system.

D. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

30. UNESCO has continued its cooperation with OIC through its specialized agencies, notably the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture.

31. Regarding UNESCO cooperation with ISESCO, the fourth joint meeting between both institutions was held at UNESCO headquarters on 20 and 21 November 1995, to review cooperation between the two institutions and to draw up a number of joint activities, for joint financing and implementation during the 1996-1997 biennium, in the field of education, science, culture and communication. In that respect, an agreement on cooperation was signed on 30 March 1996.

32. Furthermore, in connection with the strengthening of cooperative links between the ISESCO and UNESCO regional offices, two coordination meetings were held, on 11 and 13 February 1996, at the headquarters of the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) in Amman and in Beirut, to consider cooperative activities of UNESCO and ISESCO for 1996-1997, particularly in the field of education. This came within the purview of the Protocol on Cooperation concluded between the two organizations at the meeting of the fourth

Joint Commission and in the framework of both organizations' programmes of action in the Arab region.

33. As far as cooperation with IRCICA is concerned, the first international artisans-at-work festival was jointly organized at Islamabad in October 1994, which included an international seminar on creativity and a UNESCO experts meeting for reviewing the Decade for Craft Development. Both organizations agreed to enhance their cooperation further in conformity with their originally planned joint activities, namely, UNESCO's work on the various aspects of Islamic culture; "Arabia plan" activities; projects implemented within the framework of the World Decade for Cultural Development, including the establishment of the Rabat Museum for Islamic Crafts and Arts; cultural development in the new republics of Central Asia and Caucasia; rebuilding of the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the organization of international workshops on arts development. A memorandum of understanding between both institutions was signed on 8 June 1996 with a view to facilitating coordination and joint implementation of projects.

E. United Nations Environment Programme

34. In November 1995, UNEP assisted in the preparation of a draft medium-term United Nations-OIC plan of action to be reviewed by relevant agencies. UNEP co-sponsored a seminar on integrated pest control, crop protection and seeds improvement in North and West Africa and a workshop on transfer of know-how on the Grameen Bank, at Bamako in April 1996. UNEP also co-sponsored a subregional West Asian consultation with IDB at Abu Dhabi in June 1996.

F. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

35. A relationship agreement between UNIDO and ISESCO was signed on 16 May 1996. The agreement will facilitate cooperation between the two organizations in the following nine areas: technical and vocational education; integration of women in development activities; promotion of traditional arts and crafts; training of manpower for repair and maintenance of laboratory equipment; strengthening of applied research, including promotion of linkages between universities/research organizations and production sectors; protection of the environment, including abatement of industrial pollution and waste recycling; capacity-building for sustainable development; energy, including renewable and non-polluting energy sources and efficiency of energy use; and exchange of information and databases. A number of concrete cooperation proposals have been put forward by ISESCO and are currently being considered by UNIDO.

V. COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

36. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and OIC have maintained a cooperative working relationship since 1987. The Agency has benefited from the ongoing support of OIC for its efforts to provide essential services and humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees, and has regularly apprised the OIC secretariat of UNRWA activities and programmes.

37. Agency officials at various levels meet periodically with OIC secretariat staff at Jeddah. From 6 to 8 September 1995, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA attended the Second Meeting of the OIC Group of Eminent Persons, serving as Chairman of the Committee for Economic, Social, Science and Technology Affairs. The Agency also maintains contact with the Islamic Development Bank, a subsidiary organ of OIC.

38. UNRWA looks forward to developing its relationship with OIC. In this regard, the Agency notes the concern expressed by OIC about the issue of refugees in general and Palestinian refugees in particular, as well as the inclusion of human resources development as a new area of cooperation in the updated plan of action approved by the Standing Committee for Commercial and Economic Cooperation (COMCEC) in October 1994.

B. United Nations Development Programme

39. A memorandum on cooperation and liaison between UNDP and OIC was signed on 20 October 1981. This memorandum established the guiding principles of collaboration between the two organizations for the promotion and enhancement of technical cooperation among developing countries, with particular emphasis on OIC member countries. In this context, a mutual consultative mechanism was envisaged for the purpose of appropriate reciprocal assistance.

40. In this regard, at the end of 1994, senior-level direct consultations took place in New York between the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and SESRTCIC, during which the Director-General of SESRTCIC met with the Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. During these consultations, it was observed that technical cooperation among Islamic countries could best be enhanced by providing support for capacity-building within the structures of member Governments' coordination and focal point mechanisms for technical cooperation among developing countries. As an immediate step, it was agreed that the strengthening of the capacities of national focal points should be given priority attention. In this connection, the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries held a meeting of TCDC focal points for the African region at Accra, in April 1995, in which African member States of OIC participated. For the Asia and Pacific region, a meeting is foreseen for the last quarter of 1996, and a meeting for the Arab region is envisaged soon after that. OIC will be invited to play an active role, especially in providing

possible resource persons who will review and discuss the various aspects of jointly enhancing technical cooperation among developing countries in the regions of concern to OIC.

41. Exchange of information and data related to the dissemination of technical cooperation among developing countries has been another important topic of discussion between OIC and UNDP. The Information Referral System (INRES) of UNDP on the available capacities in the South has been reviewed at length. A set of INRES database diskettes worldwide was passed on to SESRTCIC and it was agreed to regularize the flow of information on TCDC capacities existing in the developing countries. INRES has since been linked to the Internet system as part of the multidimensional INRES capability, which is also to include a roster of experts/consultants available in the developing countries, together with a catalogue of "best practices" in technical cooperation among developing countries worldwide. The member countries of OIC will benefit from this new feature.

42. As part of enhancing technical cooperation among Islamic countries, the various TCDC workshops and seminars supported by the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries have also been reviewed by OIC and UNDP, especially those held in OIC member country regions. Among these workshops were the regional workshops on communication and information networks, held at Cairo in December 1994 and at Tunis in June 1995. These two workshops, which were aimed at establishing an "Arab regional information highway", proved to be highly successful in providing the 16 OIC countries of the Arab region with an effective forum for the sharing and exchange of technical expertise. The active participation of IDB made it especially significant in terms of exploring the possible investment potentials involved in building up and expanding such a communication and information infrastructure among the OIC member States of the Arab region. Exchange of information between SESRTCIC and UNDP also took place in connection with the regional meeting of focal points in agriculture, organized by OIC in Burkina Faso in March 1996. All of these cooperation activities have contributed positively to the enhancement of technical cooperation among Islamic countries and among developing countries.

43. At present, active collaboration between SESRTCIC and UNDP is under way for organizing an interregional workshop on industrial estates for the benefit of a select group of OIC developing countries.

C. United Nations Children's Fund

44. Cooperation between the United Nations Children's Fund and OIC began more than 20 years ago with an initial focus on information exchange. A memorandum of cooperation, setting out the modalities for consultation, exchange of information, joint action, reciprocal representation and liaison, was signed in October 1982. Since then, cooperation has progressively expanded to address the needs of children and women.

45. In June 1994, the general secretariat of OIC, with technical and financial assistance from UNICEF, held a symposium on child rights and care in Islam. After analysing the interface between Islamic tenets and the implementation of

child rights, the symposium issued a declaration that the Convention on the Rights of the Child does not contradict the Islamic shariah. The commitments of OIC members to the "decade goals" for children and to the Convention were further reaffirmed at the subsequent high-level meetings of OIC, including the Seventh OIC Summit, in December 1994, and the twenty-third session of OIC Foreign Ministers, in 1995.

46. Cooperation between OIC and UNICEF now faces a double challenge: first, to work with the member countries of OIC for universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and secondly, to encourage measures to implement the Convention in countries where it has been ratified. These challenges will necessitate the sharing of information, technical resources and successful experiences, as well as the implementation of laws promulgated for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

D. Economic Commission for Africa

47. Since 1989, ECA has been developing cooperative relations with OIC, as well as with its specialized institutions. Within the context of General Assembly resolution 50/17, ECA has undertaken, or plans to undertake, the following activities:

(a) Industry. In 1995, three workshops on the improvement of the quality of leather and leather products in Africa, organized and financed jointly with IDB, were held at Tangier and Casablanca, Morocco and at Khartoum, respectively. Another workshop, on the management system for women entrepreneurs in small-scale industries, was organized at Dakar from 18 to 22 March 1996;

(b) Transport. Within the context of the implementation of the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000), ECA held discussions with IDB in May 1993 and submitted projects in three areas, namely, (i) missing links of the trans-African highway; (ii) regional integration, removal of non-physical barriers and cooperation in shipping and air transport; and (iii) projects of land-locked countries, especially dry ports. A document entitled "UNTACDA II projects of African member States of the Organization of Islamic States" (UNTACDA/93/11) was prepared and submitted to IDB for consideration. While these project proposals are yet to be translated into concrete collaborative activities, ECA is of the view that the areas indicated are important. Also, a joint request by ECA and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for funding some of the activities with regard to the organization of the Third African Roads Safety Congress, to be held at Pretoria, South Africa in April 1997, is being prepared for OIC consideration;

(c) Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS). PADIS has collaborative arrangements in the area of dissemination of information with a number of OIC institutions, including the following: ISESCO, which is a participating centre in the PADIS network, ICDT, the Islamic Research and Training Institute, and IDB, with which PADIS is exchanging information and data through OICISNET. Also, at the request of IDB, PADIS has submitted a project

proposal for information-gathering and exchange among African member States of OIC. Action on this is still pending;

(d) Science and technology. The Islamic Foundation for Science, Technology and Development, together with ECA co-sponsored a West African subregional conference on science and technology, which was held at Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire from 8 to 11 May 1996.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

48. During 1995, in the area of development and management of water, ESCWA, with the support of OIC, implemented a regional project on assessment of water resources in the ESCWA region, using remote-sensing techniques. The project was executed in cooperation with the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre and financed by UNEP and the Islamic Development Bank. The outcome of the project included the development of regional hydrological/hydrogeological maps (scale: 1/2,500,000) and the formulation of options for the development and management of major water resources, focusing on shared water resources.

49. In the area of industry, a regional project on engineering infrastructure was co-sponsored by ESCWA, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Islamic Development Bank and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The second phase of the project was completed in December 1995. It included the preparation of six feasibility studies for selected industries. The final phase is scheduled to be completed during 1996.

50. In the area of technology, a workshop was organized at Amman in 1995 as a joint ESCWA/OIC activity, in cooperation with the Amman Chamber of Industry, the Industrial Investment Bank, ESCWA and UNIDO. ESCWA provided backstopping as well as substantive assistance to the workshop.

51. In the field of agriculture, a workshop entitled "Project planning with environmental considerations" was organized in Turkey from 18 to 29 September 1995, in collaboration with FAO and SESRTCIC.

52. In the area of international trade, OIC is currently conducting two important projects. One involves the building of a database on intra-OIC trade and the other relates to the financing of intra-OIC exports. The experience gained from this exercise will eventually help ESCWA to develop its own database for trade.

F. International Fund for Agricultural Development

53. IFAD has continued to maintain close cooperation with OIC in the priority areas of food and security, agricultural and rural development and financing of joint projects. During the period under review, IFAD and the Islamic Development Bank have continued to expand their cooperation. Regular meetings have taken place between the representatives of the two institutions, both in Rome and at Jeddah. Furthermore, on 17 April 1996, the President of IDB,

accompanied by a high-level delegation, visited IFAD headquarters and held fruitful discussions with the Fund's management on ways and means to strengthen collaboration, particularly through an increase in the co-financing of projects in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

54. On 3 July 1995, IFAD and ISESCO signed a cooperation agreement in order to help promote agricultural and rural development objectives in member countries of both organizations. Within the framework of this agreement, a seminar on the management of water resources will be organized and sponsored by the two organizations. It is expected to take place at Bamako in October 1996.

55. IFAD organized a regional workshop jointly with SESRTCIC to identify and strengthen the capacities of focal points for technical cooperation in agricultural and rural development in the African OIC member countries. The workshop was held at Ouagadougou from 9 to 11 November 1995.

G. Other United Nations specialized agencies and international organizations

56. The World Food Programme, the International Labour Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Maritime Organization and the World Trade Organization conveyed information to the United Nations Secretariat on their programmes and activities in OIC member States over the course of the year.